

**Washington, DC** – Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Springfield) today voted for H.R. 3961, the Medicare Physician Payment Reform Act. The legislation will prevent a 21% cut in physician reimbursements next year and permanently reform the Medicare payment system. Without this legislation, doctors are scheduled to take a 21% cut in reimbursements starting in January. This would be disastrous for the 580,000 Medicare beneficiaries in Oregon. Doctors wouldn't take patients and seniors would not be able to get medical care.

"This is a big victory for the 137,000 seniors on Medicare in Southwest Oregon. Every day I hear from seniors who say they can't find doctors that will accept new Medicare patients because the reimbursements are too low. Slashing payments to doctors another 21% would be utterly devastating. Physicians would stop taking Medicare patients at all. That is totally unacceptable. This legislation will fix the immediate problem and keep providers from falling further behind," DeFazio said.

"But, there is still a problem particular to Oregon that needs a long-term fix--the outdated formula that has had Oregon and 16 other states locked in to unfair and outdated reimbursement rates. I am pleased that I was able to help get language included in the recently passed House health care reform bill that will actually increase reimbursement rates for doctors and other providers in Oregon. These two pieces of legislation together will ensure that seniors have access to the quality health care they deserve," DeFazio continued.

This bill tackles seniors' main concern – preventing reimbursement cuts that could force doctors to stop seeing Medicare patients. It also builds on the historic health insurance reform bill the House passed earlier this month. The reform bill will lower premiums, extend the solvency of Medicare, improve preventive and primary care for seniors, and close the coverage gap for seniors who incur drug costs between \$2,700 and \$6,154 yearly --commonly referred to as the "donut-hole". Perhaps most importantly for Oregon, the health reform bill will fix the outdated "geographic disparities" that exist in the Medicare reimbursement formula. These disparities lock Oregon, and 16 other states, into unfairly low rates.